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ABSTRACT

Various organizations in Oklahoma that had an interest in administrator preparation, certification, and professional development pooled their efforts and worked collegially to apply for and use the state Leadership in Educational Administration Development (LEAD) grant for the professional improvement of state school administrators. The LEAD Project's service focus was to develop and implement a research-based leadership skills training model to improve practicing administrators' effectiveness with preference given to beginning principals, women, and minority group members. Areas of concern addressed by the project are processes for administrative leadership, and procedures for professional development. The first year of operation of the LEAD Project led to the development of the framework of two instructional modules that complement the state-mandated "Oklahoma Minimum Criteria for Effective Administrative Performance." In the fall of 1988, the first completed instructional module, "Site-Based School Management," was used to train 55 Oklahoma administrators in 11 sites; these administrators will be furnished with materials to train others from their respective regions this year. An example of success in using current research to design and implement training strategies for school administrators, the Oklahoma LEAD Project uses quality circle concepts by involving in the process those who will use the end product. (6 references) (KM)

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A Statewide Plan for School Improvement: The Oklahoma LEAD Project

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INTRODUCTION

Many legally mandated attempts have been made over the past several years to change the role held by a principal in the public school systems of Oklahoma. In the early part of the current decade, the Oklahoma Legislature, under advisement from the State Department of Education, the professional associations of teachers and administrators, and the colleges of education of the comprehensive universities in the state, enacted a far-reaching educational reform bill which focused in multiple ways on educator effectiveness (Teacher Reform Act of 1980, Oklahoma H.B. 1706).

In 1983, a leadership skills survey was administered to a selected group of Oklahoma school principals to help determine skills needed by state school administrators (Fisher, 1983). Oklahoma H.B 1466 of 1985 established a set of "Minimum Criteria for Effective Administrative Performance" (Educational Improvement Act of 1985, Oklahoma H.B. 1466). Ideas to improve the instructional leadership role of public school administrators had been assembled at the state level for planning purposes (Seaberg, St. Clair, & Gorena-Walsh, 1985).

Continued legislative involvement was evident in 1987 by the passage of a bill designed to require each school district to adopt a school improvement plan, a staff development plan, and a capital improvement plan which were to be submitted together to the State Department of Education each year and every fourth year thereafter. Yearly updates of the plans were mandated in the law (Oklahoma H.B. 1210, 1987).

It was only natural that the state of Oklahoma should join in the pool of states which applied for funds resulting from federal legislation providing for Leadership in Educational Administration Development (LEAD). The Oklahoma LEAD Project was designed to meet the needs which came from roles mandated by legislative reform.

In the mid-1980's, Oklahoma educational leaders identified from research seventeen areas they considered to be Minimum Criteria for Effective Administrative Performance (Folks, 1987, p. 38). In 1985, activities were designed to provide information and training dealing with the Minimum Criteria to all state public school administrators. State educational leaders felt that help needed to be provided to enable local school district administrators to better meet the additional demands put upon them by the newest round of state mandates.

The Oklahoma LEAD Project provided another avenue to increase resources and professional development for school leaders. The various organizations in the state which had an interest in administrator preparation, certification, and professional development, pooled their efforts and worked collegially to apply for and use the LEAD grant for the professional improvement of state school administrators. The service focus of the Oklahoma LEAD Project was to develop and implement a research-based leadership skills training model to improve the

effectiveness of practicing administrators in Oklahoma with preference given to beginning principals, women, and minority group members.

METHODS

The key to the success of the Oklahoma LEAD Project lies in the consortium of organizations which governs the direction of the project. The Oklahoma State Department of Education was chosen as the fiscal agent for the grant, yet, five other organizations play a role in the operation of the project.

The Cooperative Council for Oklahoma School Administration (CCOSA), the Professional Development Center of Norman, the College of Education of Oklahoma State University, the Professional Development Center of Stillwater, and the College of Education of the University of Oklahoma, all work with the director of the project who is employed by the State Department of Education, to provide governance of the Oklahoma LEAD Project. Better coordination of activities from member organizations has been possible due to the working relationships established in the course of this program. (See Table 1, Organizational Chart)

The director works closely with all Consortium representatives. Semi-annual meetings of group members are held to provide better lines of communication between members about the LEAD Project as well as individual projects which might compliment or conflict with Consortium member activities.

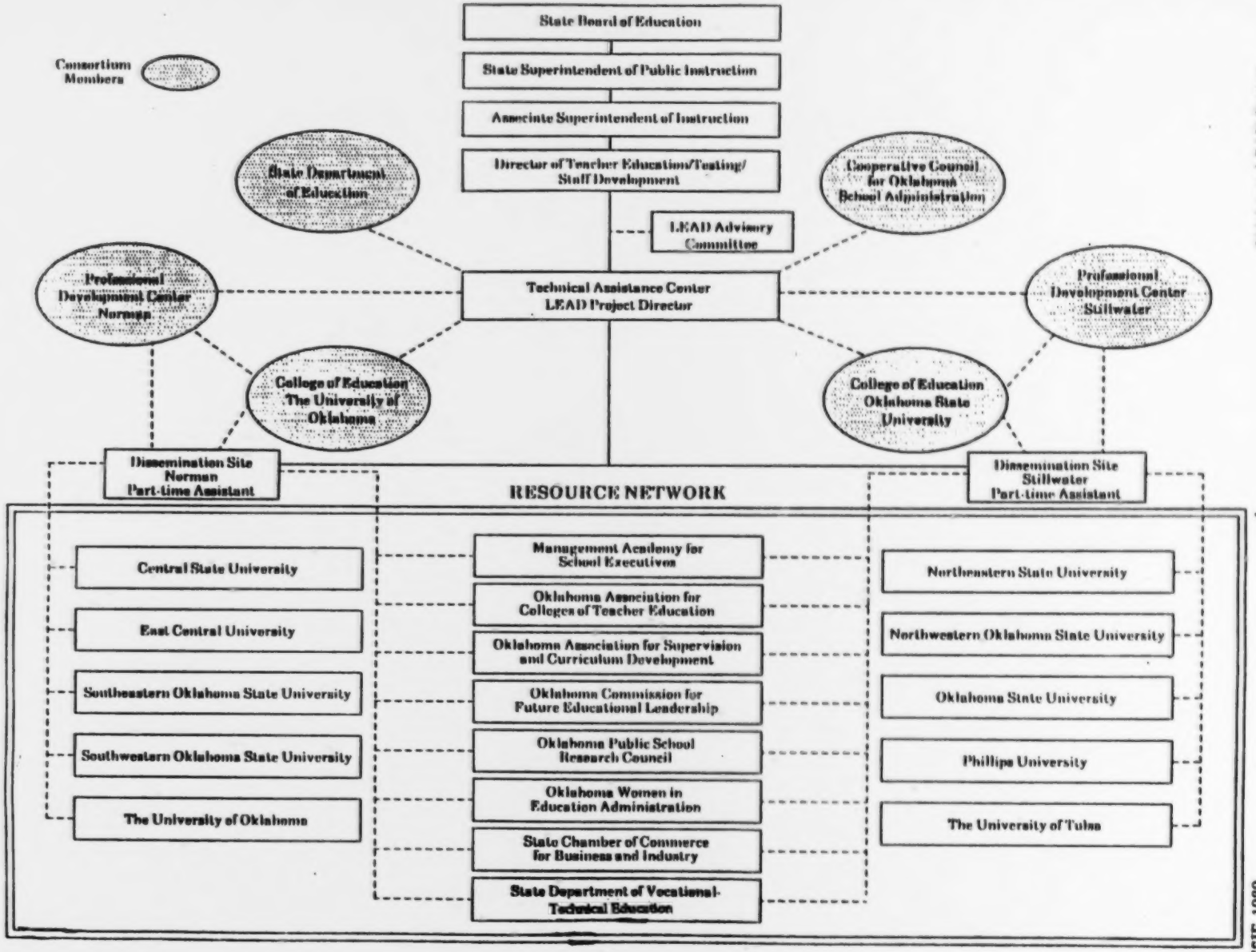
Two areas of concern are addressed by the Oklahoma LEAD Project: Processes for Administrative Leadership, and Procedures for Professional Development.

Processes for Administrative Leadership involves program designs which look at areas identified as "Tools" and "Skills" necessary for effective administrative performance. Procedures for Professional Development involves program design components necessary to develop proper training methods and delivery systems to meet all potential audiences.

TABLE 1

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

CONSORTIUM AND ORGANIZATIONAL CHART


State Board of Education
State Superintendent of Public Instruction
Associate Superintendent of Instruction
Director of Teacher Education/Testing/ Staff Development
Consortium Members
State Department of Education
Cooperative Council for Oklahoma School Administration
LEAD Advisory Committee
Professional Development Center Norman
Technical Assistance Center LEAD Project Director
Professional Development Center Stillwater
College of Education The University of Oklahoma
College of Education Oklahoma State University
Dissemination Site Norman Part-time Assistant
Dissemination Site Stillwater Part-time Assistant
RESOURCE NETWORK
Central State University
East Central University
Southeastern Oklahoma State University
Southwestern Oklahoma State University
The University of Oklahoma
Management Academy for School Executives
Oklahoma Association for Colleges of Teacher Education
Oklahoma Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
Oklahoma Commission for Future Educational Leadership
Oklahoma Public School Research Council
Oklahoma Women in Education Administration
State Chamber of Commerce for Business and Industry
State Department of Vocational-Technical Education
Northeastern State University
Northwestern Oklahoma State University
Oklahoma State University
Phillips University
The University of Tulsa

Oklahoma LEAD Project

NCSIE 1989

Both Oklahoma educators and the United States Secretary of Education had identified areas of concern which should be addressed by any program which dealt with professional improvement for school administrators.

The Oklahoma LEAD Project staff constructed a matrix which reported the relationship of both sets of criteria. The two groups of educators were advocating improvement for the same basic sets of skills and concepts. (See Table 2: MATRIX) The Oklahoma LEAD Project packaged the necessary Process and Procedures together to address concerns pointed out by the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Oklahoma State Department of Education.

TABLE 2
MATRIX

OKLAHOMA MINIMUM CRITERIA	SECRETARY'S PRIORITY SKILL AREAS							
	A Creating & enhancing environments for learning	B Evaluating curricula to improve effectiveness	C Analyzing instruction & teacher performance	D Appraising student, school performance	E Understanding, applying research outcomes	F Organizing/managing school resources	G Ensuring discipline & school order	H Developing human relations skills
1. The administrator and staff develop goal statements which are a result of a needs assessment, a written analysis of student test scores and other data as well as community input.	●	●		●				
2. The administrator uses a minimum of instructional time for non-instructional routines, thus maximizing time on task.	●					●		
3. The administrator works with staff to develop and communicate defined standards of conduct which encourage positive and productive behavior.	●						●	
4. The administrator establishes and maintains rapport with staff and students providing a pleasant, safe and orderly climate for learning.	●							
5. The administrator works with staff in collegial and nonthreatening ways to promote and improve instruction.	●		●					●
6. The administrator sets high expectations for staff.	●							●
7. The administrator provides needed resources for staff.						●		
8. The administrator works with staff to establish curriculum objectives, sequence and lesson objectives.		●						
9. The administrator works with staff to assure that all learners are involved in the learning process.	●	●		●			●	
10. The administrator assists the staff in monitoring student progress.				●				
11. The administrator works with the staff to develop a program to recognize academic achievement.			●	●				
12. The administrator educates the staff to recognize and display the teaching criteria upon which evaluation is conducted.			●					
13. The administrator observes in the classroom the performance criteria as defined by the district.			●					
14. The administrator summatively evaluates the staff only after classroom observations are made, performance feedback is given, growth goals are set and alternative methods are offered.			●					●
15. The administrator provides written discipline policies to which students are expected to perform.	●						●	
16. The administrator provides a written school building improvement plan that supports the district's five-year school improvement plan describing goals, objectives and staff development activities.	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
17. The administrator provides a written analysis of student test scores and other data to assure that the various student populations are benefiting from the instructional program.	●	●	●	●	●			

RESULTS

Emphasis for the first year of the Oklahoma LEAD Project was to: 1) establish offices and initial activities at the selected dissemination centers; 2) identify, organize and collect information; 3) develop and implement assessment instruments; 4) develop individual training modules and group training strategies; and, 5) initiate awareness workshops which support the basic program. All of the activities were completed within the confines of the first year of operation. Dissemination centers are officed in the Professional Development Centers in Norman and Stillwater.

An assessment instrument designed for the Oklahoma LEAD Project was used in the spring of 1988 to help determine current perceptions of state administrators in relation to the state mandated set of "Oklahoma Minimum Criteria for Effective Administrative Performance".

Also, a professional library housed in the office of the Oklahoma LEAD Project Director has been started. In the first year, numerous audio and video tapes, books, and other documents supporting administrator interests have been collected. The Project has purchased several years of ERIC microfische to be used to help state administrative practitioners find information on topics of interest at little or no cost. The ERIC system purchase will also save administrators valuable time by providing a source from which data can be gathered without spending road and research time in university libraries often many miles distant from rural locations of Oklahoma pubic schools.

A computerized data base of state administrators has been developed at the Norman Professional Development Center, where the LEAD Project Director is officed. The data base constructed for the project contains all certified personnel in the state who are administrators or who hold an administrative certificate. The base has twenty-five fields for each certificate holder and was constructed from three existing data bases in the state. The new comprehensive data base allows comparisons and other information with ease never before available.

The first year of operation of the Oklahoma LEAD Project led to the development of the framework of two instructional modules which compliment the state mandated "Oklahoma Minimum Criteria for Effective Administrative Performance". Practitioners were selected from school systems in the state to help develop the instructional modules now completed. Current plans call for the continuation of implementing a process for the "training of trainers " to provide a bank of administrators skilled in desired competencies.

Instructional modules completed at the present time are "Site Based School Improvement", "Teaching Criteria" and "Student Achievement". Other areas identified for module development are: "Research Retrieval" and "Application, Supervision/Evaluation", "School Discipline", and "Expectations". All modules are in the final stages of development. Once development is complete, the Oklahoma LEAD Project will provide professional development programs for all

possible group sizes. Workshop presentations will be available for large groups, small group works sessions will be designed , and interactive video computer modules will allow for individual learning. (See Table 3: Instructional Modules)

TABLE 3

Instructional Modules for the Oklahoma LEAD Project	
LEAD MODULE I:	*Site-Based School Improvement*
LEAD MODULE II:	*Teaching Criteria*
LEAD MODULE III:	*Supervision/Evaluation*
LEAD MODULE IV:	*School Discipline*
LEAD MODULE V:	*Student Achievement*
LEAD MODULE VI:	*Expectations*
LEAD MODULE VII:	*Research Retrieval/Application*

Four geographic regional awareness workshops, one in each quadrant of the state, were used in the spring of 1988, to pilot activities designed for the first instructional module developed, "Site Based School Improvement".

The name for the first instructional module was chosen with care. Developers thought some groups might react negatively to the descriptors "Site Based School Management" or "Teacher Empowerment". Both descriptors connote power focus to a specific group. "Teacher Empowerment" might indicate to some building principals the reassignment of powers and duties to the teachers, thus providing a possible source of jealousy by the administrator who once held most of the power in the building. Conversly, "Site Based School Management" might indicate to some classroom teachers that the building site is still to be managed by the principal with no real change in the status quo. Thus, the selection of the descriptor "Site Based School Improvement". Not many people involved can argue or be upset with a plan to "improve" the local school site.

The completed module was used for training in the Fall of 1988. Training was accomplished by identifying up to three local educational agencies in each of the earlier identified quadrants and one additional section located in the central portion of the state. At the present time, eleven sites have piloted the methods and materials developed for "Site Based School Improvement".

Fifty-five administrators were trained from the selected sites in the first year of training. Each participating district will serve as a future regional training site. Administrators from each selected pilot site were trained using methods and materials developed by the project and will be furnished necessary material to train others from their respective regions this year.

By using the "Trainer of Master Trainers" approach, more schools will be served during the third year of the project. All "Master Trainers" were trained in sessions which began in November of last year at the Norman Professional Development Center.

Master trainer trainees are expected to apply concepts learned from each meeting with their respective staff at the local education agency. In effect, the local education agency became an extension of the LEAD Center, and each local education agency will become a laboratory for the methods and materials developed through the Oklahoma LEAD Project.

SIGNIFICANCE

The Oklahoma LEAD Project is an example of success in using current research to design and implement training strategies for public school administrators. The Oklahoma project involves concepts of quality circles by involving in the process those who will use the end product.

Practitioners from state public schools were selected to design the instructional modules for use by peers. Consultants from the major comprehensive universities which deal with administrator preparation helped design a process to allow for the development of the modules by state practitioners.

Group strategies are used in all phases to ensure that the final product is appropriate to the population it is designed to help. The structure allows for modeling of concepts being taught.

In Oklahoma, the past decade has brought new task assignments to state administrators. An effort is under way which provides resources and training to front-line administrators to help them accomplish tasks they have been recently mandated to accomplish.

Focus of the Oklahoma LEAD Project for the second year was: 1) the delivery of services and training; 2) acquisition of program support and curricula and materials; 3) continuation of the development of training modules; and, 4) the implementation of follow-up programs.

The success or failure of the Oklahoma LEAD Project will be measurable. The two comprehensive universities in the state are providing consultants to work with the director to develop an assessment process to collect and evaluate data from participating school districts to determine the effects the training provided by the project has on the participating school districts.

Base-line data from participating districts involved in Module 1 training was collected in late October and early November of the second year before training began.

A bench mark was established to measure variance in selected areas to be addressed by the professional development activities designed by the Oklahoma LEAD Project. An assessment instrument was constructed which collects data in the areas of "Decision Making", "School Climate", and "Communication Patterns". Data was collected before the start of training and will be collected at other appropriate times to allow for tracking of any changes which occur as a result of the LEAD Project training.

During the third year of the Project, focus is directed toward: 1) continued implementation and maintenance of all project activities; 2) review and evaluation of the program's effectiveness; and, 3) the development of a plan for the institutionalization of the Project LEAD concept.

Strength of the Oklahoma LEAD project lies in two areas: (1) the involvement of practitioners in the design of materials for use with peers; and, (2) the close working relationships with several groups in the state who deal with administrative preparation, certification, and professional development. By working cooperatively together, long range plans for the improvement of administrative skills can be better coordinated. The Oklahoma LEAD Project has provided a common avenue of travel for the various groups which deal with state administrators.

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